

Untangling the Web: **Treating Sex and Porn Addiction**

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Sex Addiction is Not

- ▶ A Moral Stance
- ▶ Part of a Religious Belief System
- ▶ A Symptom of Underlying Axis I Illness
- ▶ Same Sex Interest or Activity
- ▶ Sexual Offending
- ▶ Fetish/Paraphilia
- ▶ Sociopathy
- ▶ Sex Negative
- ▶ The End of a Relationship

Sex Addiction IS...

A Stand Alone Diagnosis

Characteristics of Any Addiction

Criteria for assessing Sex Addiction closely parallels guidelines for assessing Substance Dependency, Alcoholism, and Compulsive Gambling:

- ▶ Loss of control
- ▶ Continuation despite adverse consequences
- ▶ Obsession or preoccupation

The presence of all three criteria operationally defines addiction to any drug or behavior

Criteria for Sex Addiction

Three out of ten...

10. Distress, anxiety, restlessness,
or irritability if unable to engage in
the behavior

Criteria for Sex Addiction

Three out of ten...

1. Recurrent failure to resist sexual impulses in order to engage in specific sexual behaviors
2. Engaging in behaviors longer than intended (losing time)
3. Desire or unsuccessful efforts to stop, reduce, or control type or frequency of behavior.
4. Inordinate amounts of time
5. Preoccupation with sexual behavior or preparatory activities
6. Engaging in behavior when expected to fulfill occupational, academic, domestic or social obligations
7. Continuation despite persistent social, financial, psychological, physical, legal or health problems
8. Need to increase intensity, frequency in order to achieve desired effect
9. Reduction or loss of social, occupational, recreational or spiritual activities— sex more important
10. Distress, anxiety, restlessness, or irritability if unable to engage in the behavior

Signs of ???????

- ▶ Increased Heart Rate
- ▶ Shallow Breathing
- ▶ Perspiration- palms, underarms, etc.
- ▶ Reduced Intellectual Functioning
- ▶ “Rush” or “Intensity” Feeling

ADDICTS CALL IT...

- ▶ The Bubble
- ▶ The Trance
- ▶ Spaced Out
- ▶ Think ...
- ▶ Dissociative State
- ▶ Mood Alteration
- ▶ Trauma

Substances of Mood

- ▶ Serotonin
- ▶ Dopamine
- ▶ Adrenaline
- ▶ Endorphins

In 12-Step Language ...

POWERLESS
NESS!

Sex Addiction is not
about SEX
And definitely not
about orgasm!

We Can Define
Cybersex
As Any Form of Sexual
Expression that is
Accessed Through a
Computer or the Internet.

Internet Pornography

- ▶ One 2004 study found that at any one time there were over 420 million separate pages of porn online
- ▶ Estimates of income from online porn vary, but the industry likely generates between two to four billion dollars annually (numbers are purposefully skewed...)
- ▶ In 2005 there were over 72 million visits worldwide to porn or sexual content websites

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Untangling the Web

SEX, PORN, AND

FANTASY OBSESSION

IN THE INTERNET AGE

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Can you help me? I have a problem...

"I have joined a porn site again and have spent the last week e-mailing women for sex. I am online 24-hours a day. I have not worked, I hardly sleep. I am useless..."

"I am concerned about my addiction to pornography, I feel that it has kept me from taking the risks needed to be intimate enough to have a real relationship with someone else. I'm 32."

"I have lost someone I loved very much due to my cybersex and porn addiction. Please tell me how I can get the help I need."

Online sexual content,
chats and interaction has
forced us to reassess
sexuality in our culture.

For example, today what
do you consider to be...

Infidelity?

What's the big deal

It's just a guy thing...

“My sexual energy was “saved” for the Internet. I lost interest in sex with my wife because I knew there were an unlimited number of pictures on the Internet that could “get me off” any time I preferred.”

— 45-year old married man; sex with wife every 2 months

“I would rather look at porn than be with my girlfriend. Sometimes I resent her presence, as it keeps me away from the Net.”

— 38 year old man; divorced

What makes online sex so popular and so exciting?

- ▶ ACCESSIBILITY
- ▶ AFFORDABILITY
- ▶ ANONYMITY
- ▶ PERCEIVED SAFETY

Cybersex Addiction/Compulsivity: Range of Online Sexual Activities in Year 2008

- ▶ View and download pornography with or without masturbation
- ▶ Visit sexually-oriented chat rooms to voyeur or hook up with someone
- ▶ Exchange sexually explicit e-mails
- ▶ Belong to online sex clubs, sex organizations or hooker review sites
- ▶ Engage in real-time one-on-one masturbation
- ▶ Plan ahead to sexually act out on the road
- ▶ Offender / Predator Behaviors
- ▶ Hire prostitutes to perform live sexual acts on command
- ▶ View and download illegal or deviant sexual images

But now you can do it from your cell iPhone, cell or laptop!

Consequences of Compulsive Cybersex

- ▶ Loss of time for work, family, recreation
- ▶ Family violence / relationship loss
- ▶ Loss of job because of cybersex at work
- ▶ Guilt and shame due to keeping secrets
- ▶ Decreased interest in sex with spouse
- ▶ Increased preoccupation with sex
- ▶ Increased overall sexual objectification
- ▶ Children potentially exposed to porn
- ▶ Increased interest in deviant sex
- ▶ Potential arrest for illegal online sex
- ▶ Escalation to off-line sex

Treatment is the Reclaiming of Reality

Sexual Sobriety is...

Sticking to a written contract of sexual behaviors (do's and don'ts) that is witnessed and signed by another recovering person or therapist, clergy etc. The plan is not altered unless that other person is involved. Deviation from the plan is considered a slip and loss of time.

Simple Sexual Boundary Plan

List of Behaviors
I Want to Stop

- ▶ A
- ▶ B
- ▶ C
- ▶ D
- ▶ E
- ▶ F

List of Behaviors
I Want to Add

- ▶ A
- ▶ B
- ▶ C
- ▶ D
- ▶ E
- ▶ F

Treatment Focus

- ▶ Ongoing assessment
- ▶ Stop the acting out! —Make contracts and plans—
- ▶ Confront denial and teach relapse prevention
- ▶ Here and now
- ▶ Task oriented
- ▶ Crisis resolution
- ▶ Provide education
- ▶ Shame reduction—By gaining insight into past and trauma history
- ▶ Provide accountability
- ▶ 12-step referral
- ▶ Determine if appropriate for group

Treatment Error

- ▶ Inadequate or poorly detailed history—*assessment is everything*
(Not asking about prior arrests/offending behaviors etc.)
- ▶ Normalizing problematic sexual behavior
- ▶ Initially employing Psycho-dynamic, Analytic, Jungian and other non-cognitive behavioral method
- ▶ Not identifying triggers, patterns, rituals and behavioral escape methods (relapse prevention planning)
- ▶ Focusing too early on trauma

Treatment Error

- ▶ Not addressing the sexual behavior as the primary initial treatment focus
- ▶ Not properly understanding and/or pathologizing the depth of the betrayal, grief, loss and rage of the partners and spouses
- ▶ NOT HOLDING CLIENTS ACCOUNTABLE
- ▶ Not getting supervision / consultation
- ▶ Not utilizing 12-step programs, faith based support groups, group therapy and psycho-education

12-step Groups for Sexual Addicts and Partners

Sex Addict Support

- ▶ SAA
- ▶ SA
- ▶ SCA
- ▶ SLAA-Women
- ▶ SRA

Partner Support

- ▶ S-Anon
- ▶ Alanon
- ▶ COSA
- ▶ CODA
- ▶ RCA - Couples

Sexual Addiction Treatment Informaion

- ▶ ***The Life Healing Center***
www.life-healing.com
- ▶ ***The Sexual Recovery Institute***
www.sexualrecovery.com
- ▶ ***IITAP*** - International Institute for Trauma, and
Addiction Professionals www.iitap.com
- ▶ ***SASH*** - The Society for the Advancement of
Sexual Health www.sash.net

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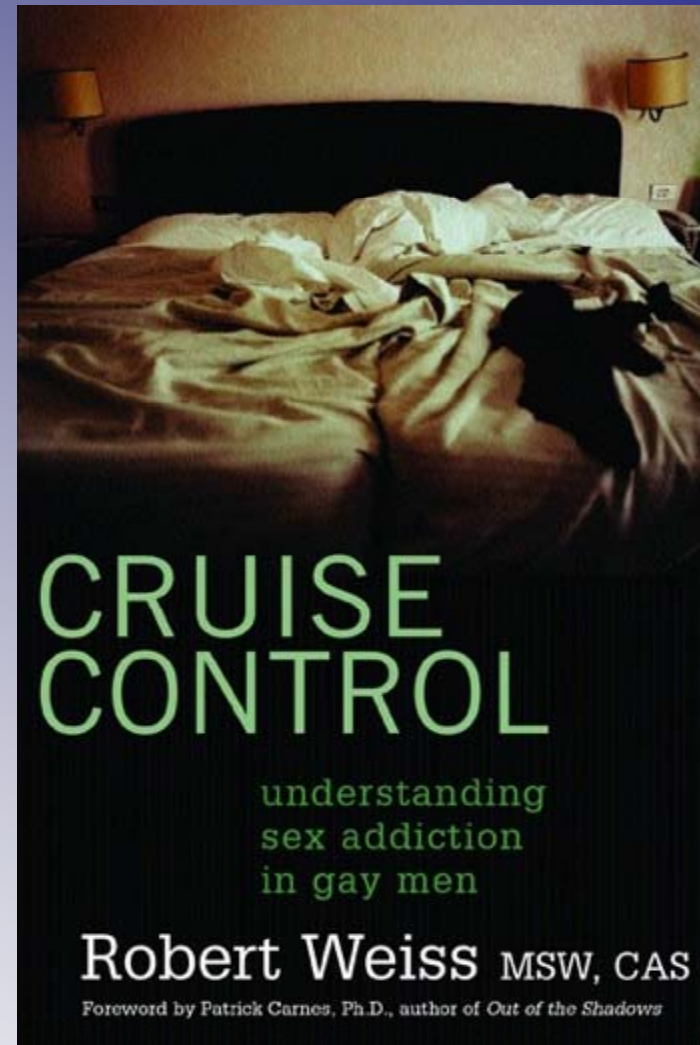
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